

# The Role of Anxiety and Religiosity on the Psychological Well-Being of Generation Z in Early Adulthood

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## ABSTRACT

Generation Z is a generation that was born in an era of technological development, which has resulted in several different characteristics compared to previous generations. The differences in these characteristics can affect psychological well-being, anxiety, and religiosity. This study aims to examine the role of anxiety and religiosity on the psychological well-being of Generation Z in early adulthood. This study uses quantitative methods and multiple linear analysis. The respondents in this study consist of 120 early adults aged 18 to 26 years. This study uses the psychological well-being scale, the religiosity scale, and the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI). The results indicated an effect of anxiety and religiosity on psychological well-being by 28%. In addition, anxiety has an effect of 19.2% and religiosity of 14.8% on psychological well-being. Thus, anxiety and religiosity considerably influence the level of psychological well-being of Generation Z. Suggestions for future research include further exploration of the role of other variables in relation to psychological well-being.

Keywords: Anxiety, Early Adulthood, Generation Z, Religiosity, Psychological Well-Being,

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## Introduction

Generation Z is the generation that was born after the millennial generation between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019). Meanwhile, according to Francis and Hoefel (2018), Generation Z are individuals born between 1996 and 2010, so Generation Z is currently around 12 to 26 years old. Generation Z tends to be closer to using technology than previous generations because it was born in an era where technology is more developed and has become part of life (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Therefore, generation Z has several different characteristics compared to previous generations.

According to research by Gentina (2020), generation Z has several characteristics. Apart from being a generation that is familiar with technology, Generation Z also possesses several identities, including expressing their character, appearance, hobbies, and preferences. Generation Z is called 'A Worried Generation' because, in terms of psychological well-being, they have many worries caused by an environment that does not always create feelings of

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security, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, generation Z tends to be at risk of having low psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being is a combination of happiness with a functioning body (Huppert, 2009). Psychological well-being is characterized by individuals who can determine their own lives, master the environment effectively, build positive relationships with others, determine the direction and goals of life, accept themselves and develop self-potential continuously (Ryff, 1989). Several factors affect psychological well-being, including age, gender, financial status, religiosity, and anxiety (Bonelli et al., 2012; Braam & Koenig, 2019; Koenig et al., 2020; Oskrochi et al., 2018)

Anxiety is a body condition that responds to danger (Bence, 2022). According to the American Psychological Association (APA), anxiety is an emotion characterized by symptoms such as tension, worried thoughts, and also physical changes such as increased blood pressure (Kazdin, 2000). According to Beck (Haikal, 2022), anxiety can result from beliefs that focus on physical or psychological threats, causing a sense of vulnerability and discomfort. Anxiety has several levels ranging from low, medium, to high.

Throughout 2020 to 2022, generation Z experiences anxiety levels that tend to be medium to high. Research by the Alvora Research Center (2022) found that as many as 40% of Generation Z feel pretty anxious, 23% are anxious, and 5% are very anxious. In addition, according to a survey conducted by Common Sense Media (2020), it was discovered that 61% of US adolescents aged 13 to 17 years were worried about their family members being exposed to COVID-19. Furthermore, 63% tended to feel anxious regarding the impacts of COVID-19, especially in relations to financial matters. As many as 42% of participants felt lonelier than usual. It can be concluded that over the past few years, due to the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, Generation Z has been vulnerable to psychological problems.

Religiosity is a belief, attitude, or religious ceremony that connects individuals with something divine (Fitriani, 2016). Religiosity makes a person a religious person, not just someone who claims to have a religion. In addition to having guidelines for religious ritual activities, in religiosity, there are also guidelines for individuals to understand experiences in their lives (Amir & Lesmawati, 2016). Therefore, religiosity is essential as a guide to living life, especially for Generation Z, which has many worries and a low level of psychological well-being.

According to a research by Francis and Hoefel (2018), as much as 77% of Generation Z state that they are religious, but at the same time, Generation Z is very open to various things that are not necessarily aligned with religion. In addition, according to a research by The State of Religion & Young People (2021), as many as 47% of the younger generation felt they can adapt to any religion (Springtide, 2022). Therefore, generation Z is a generation that is open in many ways, including matters related to religiosity.

Religiosity is an essential source of happiness for young people in Indonesia, where there is a belief in a reciprocal relationship between individuals and God (Gao, 2018). Generation Z feels positive emotions when dealing with God, in the form of feeling safe, calm, comfortable, feeling lucky, even as a form of resistance to pressure, plus the education curriculum in Indonesia greatly facilitates students to have a relationship with God (Hinduan et al., 2020). Therefore, religiosity can affect the psychological well-being of Generation Z.

Several studies show a link between psychological well-being, anxiety and religiosity. A research conducted by Every-Palmer et al. (2020) on psychological distress, anxiety, family violence, suicide, and well-being in New Zealand during the COVID-19 'lockdown' states that 39% had low well-being, and 16% had moderate to high anxiety levels. The research by Amalia et al. (2021) examines the role of religiosity for the people of Aceh in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. This study explains that individuals with high religiosity tend to have peace of mind, show a more positive outlook, and are more optimistic when facing events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Someone with a high level of religiosity will believe that everything that happens is God's provision as the supreme creator. Therefore, it can be said that there is a relationship between anxiety, religiosity, and psychological well-being.

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to examine the role of anxiety and religiosity on the psychological well-being of Generation Z in early adulthood. In this study, there are three hypotheses, namely (H1) there is an effect of anxiety on psychological well-being in Generation Z, (H2) there is an effect of religiosity on psychological well-being in Generation Z, and (H3) there is an effect of anxiety and religiosity on psychological well-being towards generation Z.

## **Methods**

### **Participant**

The participants in this study consisted of men or women belonging to Generation Z within the early adulthood category, aged 18-26 years. The total number of participants was 120, all of whom identified themselves as Muslims.

### **Research Instrument**

This study uses three variables, namely anxiety, religiosity, and psychological well-being. The anxiety variable uses a scale compiled by what is called the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI). The BAI scale consists of four components, namely subjective, neurophysiological, autonomic, and panic (Steer et al., 1993). The BAI scale consists of 21 statement items with 5 alternative answers for each item, namely "never", "almost never", "sometimes", "often", "very often". BAI

scores are classified as mild anxiety (0-21), moderate anxiety (22-35), and severe anxiety (36-63). In the anxiety scale reliability test, the Cronbach Alpha score was .916.

The religiosity scale used in this study is compiled by Amir (2021). The scale is called the Muslim religiosity scale, which consists of three aspects, namely belief, practice, and experience. The total contained in the scale is 13 items. In the reliability test, the religiosity scale got a Cronbach Alpha score of .853.

Furthermore, the psychological well-being variable used in this study will be measured using a scale prepared by Ryff and Keyes (1995) and adapted into Indonesian in a study conducted by Tasaufi et al. (2021). The psychological well-being scale consists of six aspects, namely autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The total contained on this scale is 18 items with each item there are 6 alternative answers, namely "strongly disagree", "disagree", "somewhat disagree", "somewhat agree", "agree", and "strongly agree". In the psychological well-being scale reliability test, the Cronbach Alpha score was .745.

## Data Analysis

In this study, the data analysis used was multiple linear analysis. Multiple linear regression is a study that can determine the linear effect of several independent variables on a dependent variable (Suyono, 2015). The two independent variables in this study are religiosity and anxiety, while psychological well-being is the dependent variable. Research data analysis was tested with SPSS 21 software.

## Result

**Table 1. Participant Categorization**

Category	Anxiety		Religiosity		Psychological Well-Being	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
High	71	59.2	36	30.0	39	32.5
Medium	35	29.2	39	32.5	38	31.7
Low	14	11.6	45	37.5	43	35.8
Total	120	100	120	100	120	100

Researchers found the results that explained the percentage distribution of each variable. **Table 1.** shows that the categorization of participants related to anxiety has a percentage of 11.6% in the low category, 29.2% in the medium category, and 59.2% in the high category. Furthermore, the table explains that the categorization of participants related to religiosity has a percentage of 37.5% in the low category, 32.5% in the medium category, and 30.0% in the

high category. Meanwhile, categorizing participants related to psychological well-being had a percentage of 35.8% in the low category, 31.7% in the medium category, and 32.5% in the high category.

**Table 2. Results of Regression Analysis of Anxiety, Religiosity, and Psychological Well-Being**

Variable	R Squared (%)	Significant
The Influence of Anxiety on Psychological Well-Being	19.2	.000
The Influence of Religiosity on Psychological Well-Being	14.8	.000
The Influence of Anxiety and Religiosity on Psychological Well-Being	28	.000

In **Table 2**, the statistical analysis results show the effect of anxiety and religiosity on psychological well-being at 28%. In comparison, the other 72% are factors outside of anxiety and religiosity that need further investigation. Anxiety contributes 19.2%, and religiosity contributes 14.8% to psychological well-being in generation z. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the three hypotheses are accepted, (H1) there is an effect of anxiety on psychological well-being in Generation Z, (H2) there is an effect of religiosity on psychological well-being in Generation Z, and (H3) there is an effect of anxiety and religiosity on psychological well-being for generation Z.

In addition, researchers conducted a correlation analysis on each aspect of anxiety, religiosity, and psychological well-being. Based on the results of the correlation analysis in **Table 3 (Page 12)**. It was found that there was a correlation between anxiety and psychological well-being, as well as a correlation between religiosity and psychological well-being. In the results of the correlation analysis between each aspect of anxiety and religiosity with psychological well-being, a significant p-value ( $p < .001$ ) was obtained. The correlation coefficient value of each aspect of anxiety with the psychological well-being variable, namely the value of  $r = -.536$  (subjective), the value of  $r = -.280$  (neurophysiological), the value of  $r = -.312$  (autonomic), and the value of  $r = -.397$  (panic). Meanwhile, the value of the correlation coefficient for each aspect of religiosity with the psychological well-being variable, namely the value of  $r = .375$  (belief), the value of  $r = .258$  (practice), and the value of  $r = .318$  (experience).

The results of the analysis in Table 3 also show that there is a correlation between aspects of psychological well-being and religiosity variables. Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that there was a strong positive correlation between religiosity and environmental mastery ( $r = .752$ ), personal growth ( $r = .719$ ), self-acceptance ( $r = .719$ ), and positive relations with others ( $r = .719$ ). In addition, there is a significant correlation between psychological well-being and anxiety variables. A relatively strong negative correlation occurs between anxiety and subjective aspects ( $r = -.536$ ).

## **Discussion**

Generation Z, in early adulthood, both as individuals and as part of the social environment, certainly faces various events and challenges that can affect their psychological state. According to Ryff (2006), psychological well-being is a state that an individual can fully function in a stable psychological state. Psychological well-being includes self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, personal growth, purpose in life, autonomy and environmental mastery. High value of psychological well-being was found to improve physical health, reduce the risk of mental disorders, have more positive emotions, think more flexibly and creatively, be prosocial, and have enthusiasm for living productively (Huppert, 2009).

The research hypothesis there is an influence of anxiety and religiosity on the psychological well-being of Generation Z. Based on the results of the analysis, it is found that the research hypothesis is accepted, so it can be said that anxiety and religiosity can simultaneously influence the psychological well-being of generation Z in early adulthood. Therefore, anxiety and religiosity factors also need to be considered to improve one's psychological well-being.

Researchers found that anxiety has a considerable influence on reducing level of psychological well-being. This is in line with Qolbi et al. (2020), who found that anxiety can reduce the level of well-being of early adult individuals. However, the results of this study are in contrast to Lee's research (2020) which found that anxiety does not significantly affect the psychological well-being of early adult individuals. The results showed that more than half of the early adult respondents had high anxiety levels.

Anxiety is an unstable condition accompanied by tension and unpleasantness to the point where there are suspicions and fears of disaster (Hakim et al., 2022). Supriyanto (2015) divides anxiety into two aspects: the cognitive aspect, which is indicated by the presence of anxiety and fear of the future, and the somatic aspect, which is indicated by the presence of physical or physiological symptoms. On the other hand, Beck and Steer (1991) divided anxiety into four aspects: subjective, panic, neurophysiological and autonomic symptoms. According

to Kranzler et al. (2019), anxiety can hinder the development and success of early adult individuals. This can be caused by several factors, such as environmental conditions, economy (Atkinson, 1996) and level of education and patience (Putri & Supriatna, 2022).

In early adulthood, anxiety may arise when trying to achieve life goals. Jahja (2011) states that early adulthood is a reproductive period that is full of tension and social contact and becomes a transitional period. There are changes in lifestyle and a process of searching for identity. When having good psychological well-being, individuals will have life goals and direct feelings, feel there is meaning to their life, and are sure to achieve their goals (Ryff, 1995). According to Marsidi et al. (2022), if it can be controlled properly and is at a normal level, anxiety in achieving goals can be a boost or motivation for individual progress. However, on the contrary, uncontrolled anxiety can reduce positive emotions in achieving his life goals (Rainey, 2014).

Apart from the anxiety factor, researchers also found that religiosity can improve the psychological well-being of Generation Z. This was also found in several previous studies (Azalia et al., 2018; Furqani, 2021; Ismail, 2012). Religiosity is a form of one's religious beliefs, attitudes and behavior (Wahyuni et al., 2020). The aspects of religiosity include experience, belief, and practice (Amir, 2021). The aspect of religious belief is belief in Allah which is a basis of values and norms in Islam. The practical aspect relates to the implementation of worship, such as prayer, fasting, prayer, and worship at the mosque, as well as the practice of religious learning. As for the aspect of experience related to the experience of closeness to God, they were feeling the presence and help of God and the need for help from God.

Researchers found that religiosity is an important factor in overall psychological well-being and influences various aspects of psychological well-being. This is in line with several studies which found that religiosity or the existence of religious aspects within oneself can help a person find meaning and purpose in life (Argyle, 2000; Petersen & Roy, 1985). According to Nasution (2013), a person with high religiosity tends to make God the source and goal of his life by believing that humans come from God, need to carry out God's commands, and will eventually return to God.

Religiosity can make a person more able to accept his situation. Several previous studies (Mukti & Dewi, 2013; Rahmawati, 2017) found that the higher the religiosity, the easier it is for a person to have good self-acceptance. This was different from the research by Ulina et al. (2013), who did not find any effect of religiosity on individual self-acceptance.

In addition to having good self-acceptance, religiosity affects a person's ability to establish good relationships with others. This aligns with Fitriani's research (2016), which found a link between religiosity and one's interpersonal skills in Islam. According to Razak et al. (2011), maintaining positive relationships with others and performing good behavior towards fellow

humans and the universe is part of worship. Positive interpersonal relationships are inseparable from the ability to communicate. In Islam, there is advice to keep verbal or speech so as not to cause disputes with other people, which will also impact a person's mental well-being (Fitriani, 2016).

The study by Azalia et al. (2018) found that one of the activities that can be carried out to increase religiosity is to participate in religious activities such as recitation. In addition to recitation, according to Ismail (2012), prayer activities reflect religious values and can be a meditation that evokes calm feelings and improves well-being. Religious behavior through worship activities such as praying, performing religious rituals, or carrying out sunnah can provide comfort and a source of strength to face life challenges that can affect well-being (Qolbi et al., 2020). The practice of religion or worship needs to be done obediently, submissively and obediently to create meaningful experiences, feelings of happiness and closeness to Allah (Amir, 2021).

According to Furqani (2021), someone with high religiosity will be more aware that life is a gift from God, so it is necessary to increase closeness to God and obey God's rules. Wahyuni et al. (2020) stated that individuals could feel calm when they have a close relationship with God, so it can be said that religiosity plays an important role in improving the quality and happiness of an individual. When a person has good religious ability and is devout in worship, he will generally be closer to and often remember Allah to control better feelings that make him uncomfortable, such as anxiety or fear of the future. Conversely, he is more able to feel peaceful and holy. Therefore, this shows a sign of good mental health (Andriyani, 2013; Dawam & Mahmudah, 2015).

## **Conclusion**

The results of this study conclude that there is an influence of anxiety and religiosity on psychological well-being. This study also found several correlations between anxiety and aspects of religiosity and psychological well-being. Suggestions for further research are to explore the role of other variables on psychological well-being, especially in Generation Z.

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